



# **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

## **RESTORATION OF WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT TROUT IN THE NORTH FORK OF DOOLITTLE CREEK AND IN SIXMILE CREEK, BIG HOLE RIVER DRAINAGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DECISION NOTICE**

**Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Region Three, Bozeman  
August 8, 2012**

### **Proposed Action**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to restore native westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) in the North Fork of Doolittle Creek and Sixmile Creek. Barriers precluding upstream fish movement have already been constructed or are proposed. Brook trout present in the streams upstream of the fish barriers are proposed for removal using the piscicide rotenone in the formulation of CFT Legumine (5% rotenone). The non-hybridized WCT present in the North Fork Doolittle and Sixmile Creek would be captured using electrofishing prior to fish removal, then held in non-treated waters and used to repopulate their respective streams following brook trout removal. Fish from non-hybridized populations may be used to repopulate these streams if westslope cutthroat trout are at very low density. Tailed frog tadpoles would be captured and salvaged from the streams prior to treatment and released back to the streams after brook trout are removed.

### **Montana Environmental Policy Act**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

Public comments on the proposed project were taken for 30 days (through July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012). The EA was mailed to 27 individuals and groups; legal notice was printed in the Montana Standard (Butte) newspaper. A draft EA was posted on the FWP webpage: <http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices/>. A total of one comment on this project was received.

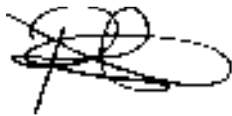
### **Summary of Public Comment**

**Comment:** Montana Historical Society, “Based on the USDA Forest Service involvement in the above-referenced project, we believe it may constitute a Federal undertaking as defined under 36 CFR 800.16y. Therefore, we anticipate the USDA Forest Service’s fulfillment of all Section 106 inventory, documentation and consultation requirements prior to any ground disturbing activities.”

**Response:** The Forest Service involvement in ground-disturbing activities will be limited only to contractual blasting that will occur in Sixmile Creek on the state-owned Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area. Barrier construction on the North Fork of Doolittle Creek was completed previously. FWP feels it has met its obligations to protect culturally significant resources from impacts of the proposed action by conducting a cultural resources inventory of the Wildlife Management Area, which did not identify any culturally significant resources that could be impacted by the proposed action. It will be the Forest Service’s decision as to whether Section 106 inventory should be performed and if such an inventory is deemed necessary. FWP will not proceed with any ground disturbing activities until the inventory is completed and any potential mitigation is performed.

### **Decision**

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and benefits and risks associated with this project, it is my decision to go forward with the proposed action of restoring WCT to the North Fork of Doolittle Creek and Sixmile Creek upstream of the fish barriers. I find there to be no significant impacts on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.



---

Patrick J. Flowers  
Region Three Supervisor

---